

Message Text

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ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W

-----052669 251451Z /44

R 251340Z AUG 77

FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8704

S E C R E T CAIRO 14145

NODIS

DEPT PASS SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EG, PLO

SUBJECT: EGYPTIAN/ARAFAT TALKS

SUMMARY: FAHMY, WHO HAS BEEN IN CONTINUOUS CONTACT WITH PLO LEADERSHIP PAST WEEK AND AGAIN MET WITH ARAFAT LAST NIGHT, ADVISES THAT AT PLO EXCOM MEETING LAST WEEK MODERATES WERE DEFEATED BY REJECTIONISTS BY EIGHT TO FOUR VOTE RE ACCEPTANCE OF OUR FORMULATION RE UN RESOLUTION 242. REJECTIONIST "FRONT" MADE UP OF SYRIAN-SUPPORTED SAIQA AND IRAQI AND SOVIET-SUPPORTED RADICAL PALESTINIANS. IN CIRCUMSTANCES, FAHMY CALIMS HE RECOMMENDED TO ARAFAT THAT SUBJECT NOT BE RAISED AT TODAY'S PCC MEETING IN DAMASCUS. MORE TIME NEEDED TO CLARIFY MATTERS. ARAFAT, ACCORDING FAHMY, REMAINS UNCERTAIN WHAT USG MEANS BY PALESTINIAN "HOMELAND" OR "ENTITY." ALTHOUGH FAHMY TOLD ARAFAT THIS COULD ONLY MEAN WEST BANK/GAZA STATE, SOME CLARIFICATION FROM PRESIDENT CARTER OR YOU DESIRABLE. ALTERNATIVELY, FAHMY PROPOSES NEW FORMULATION RE UN RESOLUTION 242 BASED ON OURS, BUT OMITTING CERTAIN ELEMENTS (PARA6). FAHMY WOULD LIKE YOUR REACTION. ARAFAT WILL RETURN CAIRO IN TWO DAYS TIME PRIOR PROCEEDING TO MOSCOW. FAHMY NOTES ANY FURTHER THOUGHTS

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WE MIGHT HAVE COULD BE CONVEYED TO ARAFAT AT THAT TIME.
END SUMMARY.

1. FAHMY ASKED ME TO MEET WITH HIM THIS MORNING. HE EXPLAINED THAT, AS WE KNEW, BOTH SADAT AND HE (BUT ESPECIALLY HE) HAVE THROUGHOUT PAST WEEK BEEN IN CONTINUOUS CONTACT WITH PLO LEADERSHIP TO URGE ACCEPTANCE

OF UN RESOLUTION 242. HE HAD AGAIN MET LAST EVENING WITH ARAFAT (JUST RETURNED FROM TRIPOLI) AND HIS FATAH COLLEAGUES. FAHMY WANTED YOU TO KNOW THAT ARAFAT HAS COME UNDER INTENSE PRESSURE FROM A "FRONT" OF SYRIAN-SUPPORTED SAIQA, IRAQI-SUPPORTED RADICAL PALESTINIANS AND SOVIET-SUPPORTED MARXIST PALESTINIANS TO REFUSE OUR FORMULATION. "FRONT" HAD SUDDENLY APPEARED AT EXCOM MEETING LAST WEEK, RESULTING IN AN EIGHT TO FOUR EXCOM VOTE AGAINST MODERATES (INCLUDING ARAFAT) FAVORING ACCEPTANCE OF OUR FORMULATION. ARAFAT NEVERTHELESS ABLE AVOID FINAL DECISION. DESPITE EXCOM VOTE SETBACK, FAHMY ARGUED THAT ARAFAT AND HIS FATAH COLLEAGUES REMAIN IN FULL COMMAND OF PLO.

2. FAHMY NOTED REJECTIONIST ELEMENTS HAD BEEN BACKED BY SYRIA, IRAQ AND SOVIETS. IN HIS VIEW, THEY HAD DONE SO TO PREVENT PLO FROM ENGAGING IN DIALOGUE WITH USG, WHICH IN TURN WOULD MEAN THAT THESE GOVTS COULD NO LONGER ACT AND SPEAK FOR PLO. PRINCIPAL PURPOSE OF REJECTIONIST "FRONT," HE ARGUED, IS TO USE PALESTINIANS FOR SYRIAN BENEFIT.

3. GIVEN ABOVE SITUATION, HE, FAHMY, HAD PERSUADED ARAFAT AND HIS COLLEAGUES NOT TO PUT THE ISSUE TO A VOTE AT TODAY'S PCC MEETING IN DAMASCUS. THEY SHOULD NEITHER TRY TO ACCEPT (WHICH THEY COULD NOT IN ANY CASE
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DO FOLLOWING NEGATIVE EXCOM VOTE) NOR REJECT OUR FORMULATION. THIS WILL BUY SOME MORE TIME.

4. PRINCIPAL PROBLEM ARAFAT FACES, FAHMY CLAIMED, IS THE UNCERTAINTY OF WHAT WE MEAN BY A PALESTINIAN "HOMELAND" OR "ENTITY." (ARAFAT MADE SIMILAR POINT TO LANDRUM BOLLING.) FAHMY HAD TOLD ARAFAT THAT, IN HIS VIEW, WHEN USG TALKS ABOUT PALESTINIAN "HOMELAND" OR "ENTITY" IT CAN ONLY BE REFERRING TO A STATE, NOT A GOVERNORATE OF JORDAN OR ISRAEL. IF PALESTINIAN PROBLEM IS RECOGNIZED AS A POLITICAL PROBLEM, AS USG HAS DONE, ONE CANNOT RUN FROM THE FACT THAT IT MUST BE A STATE. AREA AND BORDERS ARE NEGOTIABLE. FAHMY HAD TOLD ARAFAT THAT US FORMULA MADE CLEAR THAT WE HAVE IN MIND A STATE. SO DID PRESIDENT CARTER'S STATEMENT OF YESTERDAY THAT THE WEST BANK AND GAZA ARE NOT PART OF ISRAEL. (FAHMY CALLED THAT STATEMENT "WONDERFUL," AND SAID HE HAD ASKED ARAFAT TO COMMENT ON IT PUBLICLY. ARAFAT HAD DONE SO YESTERDAY AND AGAIN TODAY.) THE PALESTINIAN "ENTITY," AS FAHMY SAW IT, MUST THEREFORE BE A STATE IN THE WEST BANK AND GAZA WITH PRECISE BORDERS TO BE NEGOTIATED. ARAFAT REMAINED UNCONVINCED AND HAD NOTED THAT SOME (UNSPECIFIED) ARAB LEADERS HAD TOLD HIM

USG HAS IN MIND AN EIGHT-YEAR ISRAELI-JORDANIAN TRUSTEESHIP OF THE WEST BANK AND GAZA. THIS NOT ACCEPTABLE.

5. FAHMY CONTINUED THAT HE BELIEVES ARAFAT HAS A LEGITIMATE CAUSE FOR WORRY BECAUSE OF THE VAGUENESS OF OUR PALESTINIAN "HOMELAND" OR "ENTITY" FORMULATION. IN FAHMY'S PERSONAL RPT PERSONAL VIEW, IF PRESIDENT CARTER COULD SEND PRESIDENT SADAT, OR IF YOU COULD SEND HIM SOME KIND OF ASSURANCE THAT WHAT IS MEANT BY THE PALESTINIAN "HOMELAND" OR "ENTITY" IS THE WEST BANK OR GAZA WITH MINOR RECTIFICATIONS, HE WILL BE ABLE TO GET ARAFAT AND PLO TO ACCEPT. IN THIS CONNECTION, OUR EARLIER CLARIFICATIONS HAD BEEN EXTREMELY HELPFUL.

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6. IF WE ARE NOT ABLE TO SEND SUCH AN ASSURANCE, AND HE PROFESSED NOT TO SEE WHY WE COULD NOT DO SO, HE MIGHT BE ABLE TO PERSUADE PLO TO ACCEPT THE "MAJORITY" OF OUR FORMULATION. HE HAD IN FACT PROPOSED TO PLO (ALTHOUGH HE COULD NOT GUARANTEE THAT THEY WILL ACCEPT) A STATEMENT BASED ON OUR FORMULATION (SECTO 08075) BUT OMITTING AS REDUNDANT OUR SECOND SENTENCE. FAHMY'S PROPOSED STATEMENT READS: "THE PLO'S RESERVATION ON UNSC RESOLUTION 242 IS THAT IT DOES NOT MAKE ADEQUATE REFERENCE TO THE PALESTIN QUESTION AND THE NATIONAL RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIANS AND IT FAILS TO MAKE ANY REFERENCE TO A HOMELAND FOR THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE."

7. SAID I WOULD REPORT HIS COMMENTS, BUT EXPRESSED PERSONAL VIEW THAT HIS PROPOSED LANGUAGE IS INADEQUATE. IT DOES NOT EXPLICITLY STATE THAT PLO ACCEPTS UN RESOLUTION 242. NOR DOES IT MAKE ANY SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO THE RIGHT OF ALL STATES TO LIVE IN PEACE AND SECURITY IN THE MIDDLE EAST. FAHMY ARGUED THAT ALL THESE POINTS ARE IMPLICIT IN HIS DRAFT LANGUAGE, ADMITTEDLY ONLY BY INDIRECTION. IN ANY CASE HE WANTED YOUR REACTION.

8. FAHMY SAID ARAFAT WILL BE BACK IN CAIRO IN TWO DAYS TIME. ARAFAT WILL REPORT RESULTS OF PCC MEETING TO EGYPTIANS BEFORE PROCEEDING TO MOSCOW. IF WE HAVE ANY FURTHER THOUGHTS THAT MIGHT USEFULLY BE CONVEYED TO ARAFAT AT THAT TIME, FAHMY ASKED THAT WE LET HIM KNOW. EILTS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, REPORTS, UNGA RESOLUTIONS, PEACE PLANS, NEGOTIATIONS, MEETINGS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, CAT-B
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 25-Aug-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977CAIRO14145
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: DEPARTMENT PASS SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: P850052-1966
Format: TEL
From: CAIRO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770825/aaaaauov.tel
Line Count: 164
Litigation Code IDs:
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Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: fa6f7053-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NODS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 26-Jan-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1490837
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: EGYPTIAN/ARAFAT TALKS
TAGS: PGOV, JO, US, EG, XF, PLO, UN, (ARAFAT), (FAHMY)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbcc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/fa6f7053-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009